

3 March 1980

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

Staff Meeting Minutes of 3 March 1980

The Director was out of the city; Mr. Carlucci chaired the meeting.

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McMahon reported, as an economy move, State will close its consulates in Brisbane, Salzburg, Goteborg, Bremen, Nice, Turin, and Mandalay. In

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Fitzwater reported a retirement total for February of [] including [] SIS. Noting the high probability of a hiring/promotion freeze Government-wide, Fitzwater encouraged attendees to put promising prospects in process. Mr. Carlucci agreed such a freeze is a distinct possibility soon. []

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Lipton reported we are likely to be spared in the President's current effort to cut some \$20 billion in Federal spending. [] added that

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In response to a query from Hetu re an item in the OLC attachment to today's Executive Summary, Hitz said we have not yet received a formal request from Representative Aspin re his interest in holding a full HPSCI hearing on procedures used by the Agency in reviewing books, manuscripts, etc., written by former employees. [redacted]

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Clarke called attention to Washington Post columnist Don Oberdorfer's article "Soviet Combat Troops Resume Manuevers in Cuba" of 1 March 1980 (attached). Noting such articles do little to help build confidence needed by our allies to share intelligence with us, he suggested Hetu get in touch with Hodding Carter's office to emphasize we don't need this kind of help. [redacted]

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Hitz briefly reviewed upcoming Congressional hearings and highlighted areas of continuing concern including Charter Legislation, FOIA, cover, and prior notification issues. He called attention to SSCI resumption of Charter hearings during the second week of March with testimony to be given by Secretary Vance, Secretary Brown, and Attorney General Civiletti. He said Vance and Brown are to clear their prepared statements with us, but that question and answer sessions could prove problematical. Hitz expressed similar concern for how Civiletti would address FOIA in the context of the Charter issue. Mr. Carlucci noted that Lloyd Cutler's preparation of language re Charter oversight was not helpful. Hitz emphasized the need for caution but stressed the importance of getting the Charters business behind us as soon as possible. [redacted]

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Silver said he met with McMahon re the language in Cutler's letter and is persuaded it "will not do." He said he is drafting an alternative which, hopefully, will satisfy McMahon's concerns. He noted Cutler's language does not cover the heart of the problem. [redacted]

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[redacted]

Wortman called attention to yesterday's segment of "60 Minutes" which focused on alleged CIA help to SAVAK re torture techniques. Several attendees speculated on the source(s) of information which served CBS' purposes in this presentation. [redacted]

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THE WASHINGTON POST
1 March 1980

Soviet Combat Troops Resume Maneuvers in Cuba

By Don Oberdorfer
Washington Post Staff Writer

The Soviet combat brigade in Cuba, subject of a month-long controversy between Washington and Moscow last fall, has resumed field maneuvers on the Caribbean island, the State Department announced last night.

The 6 p.m. announcement and background briefing for reporters preceded publication of the new intelligence about the brigade in today's National Intelligence Digest, and appeared to be a bid to head off leaks from this highly classified document in an election year.

The Carter administration, making public the existence of the Soviet unit last fall, initially declared that "the status quo" was "unacceptable" to the United States. After the Kremlin refused to remove the force, President Carter announced a series of U.S. countermeasures which he claimed had altered "the status quo."

Last night's State Department announcement said, "There is no change in our assessment of the character or size of the brigade. Although this is the first exercise of this size we have seen since last August, it generally fits the pattern by which the Soviets

have exercised the brigade in the past."

The Soviet unit, estimated to be 2,500 to 3,000 men with tanks, artillery and other field equipment, is not, in its current size and configuration, considered a physical threat to the United States. The State Department restated earlier this week, and reiterated last night, that the United States has "no evidence to suggest the presence of nuclear weapons anywhere in Cuba."

An official said the present maneuvers, which are still under way, appear to be "almost a duplicate" of the activity that had been spotted at a training area south of Havana last August. That sighting by a U.S. reconnaissance satellite was taken as final confirmation of the theory that the Soviets had an operational unit, rather than a mere training or advisory force, in Cuba.

The State Department official, who did not permit use of his name under "background" rules, said Soviet training typically calls for field maneuvers every six months. He thus suggested that the reappearance of training ac-

tivity just six months since it last was seen is part of an expected pattern.

"The presence of the Soviet brigade in Cuba remains a source of serious concern to us," the official announcement said. It added:

"However, based on present evidence, this exercise in and of itself does not contradict our understanding that the Soviets will not enlarge the unit or give it additional capabilities."

Reporters were told that the United States is taking up the brigade activity with the Soviet Union through diplomatic channels. An official would not say whether the matter had been discussed by Secretary of State Cyrus R. Vance in his meeting yesterday morning with Soviet Ambassador Anatoly F. Dobrynin.

Asked why the maneuvers are being publicly announced at this time, an official said that top-secret designations and other secrecy classifications mean nothing in present-day Washington,

and therefore the information would soon be made public anyway.

The State Department announcement, in this light, was an attempt to forestall the kind of explosive political controversy touched off by the original disclosure last fall by electioneering Democratic Sens. Frank Church (Idaho) and Richard Stone (Fla.).

Church, in a statement telephoned to news organizations last night, termed the renewed maneuvers the Soviet Union's way of "flouting" the combat unit in the face of the United States.

The current disclosure takes place in a radically changed context of Soviet-American relations. Last fall the administration was striving to gain Senate ratification of the U.S.-Soviet strategic arms limitation treaty (SALT II). At that time, President Carter sought to minimize the tension with Moscow, saying Oct. 1 that "I have concluded that the brigade issue is certainly no reason for a return to the Cold War."